

Patient information

House Dust Mite Allergy

Ear Nose and Throat Department

The house dust mite is a tiny creature approximately 0.3 mm. It feeds on human skin scales, feathers, and wool. It is the mite droppings and dead mites that cause most of the symptoms when they are inhaled.

Symptoms of house dust mite allergy

The symptoms are present all the year round. They may include sneezing, an itchy, blocked, or runny nose. Your eyes and throat may also be affected.

The doctor may confirm diagnosis with a blood test.

Where is the dust mite found?

The mites need a warm moist environment to survive, and is found mainly in the bedroom, in the bed (sheets, pillows duvets and mattress). It also lives in carpets and curtains.

It is impossible to rid your home of house dust mites but there are several things you can do that will help control the levels found.

As the house dust mite is found mainly in the bed and bedroom, particular attention should be paid to flooring, furnishing, and cleaning methods there.

Do not make the bed; throw back the bedclothes to allow them to be aired during the day.

The bedroom

- Keep surfaces free of clutter, i.e., no papers and books.
- Consider replacing carpets with solid floors, i.e., laminate.
- **Damp dust** surfaces and woodwork frequently.
- **Vacuum regularly** with a hepa filter vacuum cleaner. The floor under the bed and the curtains.
- Do not leave clothes lying around; put them away in the drawers or wardrobe. Never hang your dressing gown on the back of the door.
- Do not have soft toys in the bedroom.
- Keep pets out of the bedroom i.e., dogs, cats, birds, hamsters, or fish.
- Curtains should be lightweight and washed frequently. Avoid having net curtains.

- Do not have upholstered chairs in the bedroom.
- Do not have plants or flowers in the bedroom.
- Keep the room in good structural order and repair any signs of damp.
- Keep the room as dry as possible and ensure it is well ventilated by opening the bedroom windows, even in winter.

The bed

- Use synthetic pillows and bedding with dust proof covers.
- Wash bedding at least weekly on a hot wash (56 – 60°) C and line dry in the sunshine if possible.
- Vacuum the base, the mattress between the sheets and both sides of pillows and duvets.
- Air bedding regularly on the line in the sunshine if possible.

Treatment

The doctor may prescribe a nasal spray or antihistamines. If possible, anyone suffering from dust mite allergy should avoid making the bed or dusting or take antihistamine if appropriate.

Please do not become obsessed about avoidance or cleaning, as you will never remove all the house dust mites. Try to lead as normal a life as possible.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

Please speak to your hospital doctor, your clinic nurse, your family doctor (GP)

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